**Opening of Jelepla Pass**

†922. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open a new route 'Jelepla' from Kalempod as an alternative route for Nathula Commercial route; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

**Deal on Siachen Glacier**

923. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA:
SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Foreign Minister of Pakistan has stated that India and Pakistan are close to a deal on the Siachen Glacier;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government of India thereto; and

(c) the details of the deal?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Media reports quoted Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khurshid M. Kasuri as saying to Press Trust of India in an interview on October 29, 2006 that India and Pakistan were "very close to an agreement" on the Siachen issue. So far, ten rounds of talks have been held between India and Pakistan on the Siachen issue. The last round of talks was held on May 23-24, 2006 in New Delhi in the third round of the Composite Dialogue. India's position on this issue is that authentication of the presently held positions has to be the first step before any redeployment of troops is considered. There has been no agreement on this issue.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.